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A MIDSUMMER DANCE DREAM

A Fantastic Comedy in One Act

BY

ANNA BIRD STEWART

AND

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

PRICE, TWENTY-FIVE CENTS

WAYNE PUBLISHING COMPANY INC.
153 West Forty-Fourth Street
NEW YORK CITY

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A MIDSUMMER DANCE DREAM

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NEW YORK CITY

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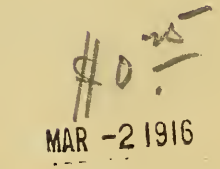

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SYNOPSIS

The Induction

Justine, a college girl, who is working on her graduating thesis, "The Heroines of Shakespeare", refuses to join her classmates in a dance at the gym in order to finish it. Overwork makes her sleepy. Through the mischievousness of Puck, who casts a spell over her dreams, the heroines become tangled in a theme of modern dancing, hence:

The Dream

Hermione and her daughter have fallen upon hard times. Proud of having taught Hamlet the "hesitation" and Macbeth the "Harry Lauder", Perdita opens a dancing school, using in the advertising Florizel's words to her,

> "When you do dance, I wish you
> A wave of the sea, that you might ever do
> Nothing but that."

Hermione objects, but when she finds other Shakespearian heroines flocking to the studio, her shocked plaint, "My daughter!" has a satisfied addition of "and my ducats!" All goes well until Lady Macbeth bumps against Katherine the Shrew during one of the dances, so that both fall. Angered, the Shrew rushes out to wreak vengeance by securing a warrant for each one's arrest: Hermione and Perdita for running a dance hall without a license, Rosalind for masquerading in boy's clothes, Juliet for breaking

out of the Tombs, and Lady Macbeth for violating the fire laws and carrying a lighted candle. Hermione forestalls her by bringing in Portia, whose legal experience gets everybody out of difficulty.

The dialogue is entirely made up of well-known Shakespearian quotations. "Each character knows a few of her own lines, and a great many of everybody's else so that Hamlet's soliloquy turns into Antony's funeral oration, or into Portia's plea for mercy for Antonio, by stages as natural as the steps of the dances themselves."—*(Detroit Times.)*

Plays one half hour.

THE PERSONS OF THE PLAY

JUSTINE, a modern college girl (or boy), who dreams the Dream.

PUCK, who introduces the Dream, with the following characters:

HERMIONE, a little too stiff after her experience as a statue, to go in for modern dancing.

PERDITA, her daughter, originator of the Shakespeare Tango.

ROSALIND, the Dr. Mary Walker of Queen Elizabeth's time.

KATHERINE, a militant Suffragist, British Importation.

JULIET, recently released from the Tombs.

LADY MACBETH, a lady with an active conscience and a lighted candle.

OPHELIA, mentally unbalanced through the intricacies of the Hesitation.

PORTIA, the Inez Milholland of the Drammer.

Any number of college girls, or boys.

NOTE.—When given by the Bonstelle Company, Jessie Bonstelle doubled the parts of Justine and Perdita, and the other college girls called to her through the window, no one else appearing on the stage. When given by the Municipal Theatre Company, in Northampton, Mass., two college boys, Everysenior and Everyjunior, replaced the girls in the Induction. If necessary to reduce the number of participants, the Ophelia episode may be omitted entirely. The introductory speech of Puck may also be cut out, and his other lines distributed among the other characters. It is advised, however, *to retain these characters* if possible, as they add greatly to the charm and completeness of the sketch. The Dream Play may also be given without the Induction. Any number of other Shake-

spearian women, Cleopatra, Beatrice, Viola, the Nurse, Audrey, Celia, Phebe, Jessica, etc., may be brought in for the closing dance. The dancing throughout may be as much elaborated as the abilities of the performers warrant.

SCENE

This play may be given in any setting; in an ordinary room, or with a background of drapery, or out of doors. When given professionally, a false proscenium arch was used, as in the productions of Granville Barker, thus setting off the stage proper, and suggesting the character of a dream play. For the Induction there was a drop back of the arch, the foreground representing a girl's room at college. For the Dream Play, this drop lifted, disclosing a Greek setting. Across the stage at the back were black marble pillars rising from a wide portico, beyond which could be seen a distant prospect of classic mountains. Each character made her entrance along this portico from the left and down the steps at the centre. At the right of the centre of the stage was Hermione's throne, of white and gold. Over it hung a velvet drapery shading from orchid to deep purple. At the right in the background was a pedestal upon which stood the money chest, and further toward the front, a chair. As each character appeared, a colored light, expressive of the personality, enveloped the person and illuminated the scene: for Puck's opening speech, a blue-violet; for Perdita, rose pink; Rosalind, straw color; Katherine, red; Lady Macbeth, orange; Juliet, steel blue; Ophelia, green; Portia, white.

IMPORTANT

Unless this play is acted with absolute seriousness, its effect is lost. It is a satire, *not* a burlesque. Each character must be played exactly as if it were given in its original setting.

A
MIDSUMMER DANCE DREAM

THE INDUCTION

(The stage is set to represent a girl's room at college with an extremely modern setting. At the right in the foreground is a table with a lighted electric lamp upon it. It is covered with large and small books. Papers and manuscripts are everywhere. DISCOVERED: *At the rise of the curtain, Justine is working at her table, consulting books and writing on her thesis. Dance music of the most modern sort is heard outside. The girl indicates in pantomime that she wishes to follow the music, but she keeps at her work.*

ENTER COLLEGE GIRLS, *out of breath from running, all laughing and talking at once. See note.)*

EDNAH

Come on, Justine. We're having a dance at the Gym.

JUSTINE

I can't come tonight.

ESTHER

Ah, come on.

JUSTINE

I have to work on my thesis.

MARIAN

You can do it tomorrow.

JUSTINE

No. I have to finish it tonight.

MARJORIE

Oh, come on, silly.

ANNA

A dance will do you good.

JUSTINE

No. I'm sorry. But I've got my head full of the Heroines of Shakespeare, and I'm not going to dance, nor go to bed, nor eat, nor anything, until I get all those classic dames locked within the pages of my thesis.

(All the girls laugh at the words "classic dames.")

It's now or never for "The Heroines of Shakespeare."

ALL

Well, goodnight, then.

JANE

Good luck to the stupid old thing.

JUSTINE

Goodnight.

(EXEUNT GIRLS, *chattering.)*

(JUSTINE *gets to work again. She grows sleepier and sleepier, yawning over her book. At last her head drops down on her*

arms on the table and she sleeps. She may remain here all during the Dream Play if desired, but must feign sleep without interruption; otherwise, she should make her exit during the dark change after PUCK'S *speech. Music Cue: (when* JUSTINE *sleeps) Schubert's Moment Musicale, continued.* ENTER PUCK.)

PUCK

As I am an honest Puck,
What fools these mortals be!
To what base uses may they return:
Imperious Cæsar, dead and turned to clay,
Might stop a hole to keep the wind away;
And Shakespeare, with small Latin and less Greek,
May yet be made in modern plays to speak.

(Music Cue: The Puck music turns into modern dance music.)

Hark, hark, a lark!
There is a dance toward.
I am never merry when I hear sweet music.
Look here upon this picture and on that.

(Points first to girl and then to books. He picks up pages of the thesis, looks at them and blows them aside.)

Words, words, words.
Sleep that knits up the ravelled sleeve of care
Grapples her to her soul with hoops of steel
And tents her to the quick.
To sleep, perchance to dream? Ay, there's the rub.
For in her sleep what dreams may come
Must give us applause.

(Makes passes around the girl's head with his wand.)

Mark, how I rock her brains with my air-drawn dagger.
She dreams a dream tonight. The PLAY'S the thing.
It is such stuff as dreams are made on, and
Its little life is rounded with her sleep.
Come. I know a bank where a wild time flows.
Follow my voice. We'll put a girdle round
About the earth in forty minutes.
Out, damnèd spot.

(PUCK *waves his hand toward the spotlight. All the lights go out. He speaks through the darkness from another part of the stage:)*

Follow my voice. *(He sings.)*

(The back drop lifts to show the stage set for the Dream Play itself. HERMIONE *is seated on the throne, right.* PERDITA *is standing on the steps of the portico, looking into the distance.* PUCK *with a little laugh, runs down right to the front of the stage, where he sits on the floor with his hands clasped around his knees.* He *watches with interest every movement made by every character, laughing impishly at each new difficulty, and on the alert to join in the action during the entire play.)*

THE DREAM

HERMIONE

Now is the winter of our discontent.
O prettiest Perdita,
True it is we have seen better days.
Who steals my purse steals trash. Our state is wretched.

(She is seated on the throne, and at the end assumes the Hamlet Pose.)

PERDITA

Hermione, dear queen, hear thy admiring daughter.
I have a plan better to mend our fortunes.
And so prepare to cast aside that lean and
Hungry look. Put money in thy purse.

(PERDITA *has run down to the throne for this, with a bundle of newspapers.)*

HERMIONE

What's to be done?

PERDITA

Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest chuck,
Till thou applaud the deed. I have put
This night's great business into my *Dispatch*,
News, *Courier*, *Sun*, and the distracted *Globe*
And in the *Lark*, the *Herald* of the morn
The abstract and brief *Chronicle* of the *Times*.
And tho' I hold the *World* but as the *World*
Likewise, in that.

HERMIONE

For my own part, that's Greek
To me.

PERDITA

Mark me. Many a time and oft
In the Rialto, I have trod a measure.
Dost thou remember how young Florizel
Did praise my dancing in no meagre terms?

(She shows HERMIONE *a newspaper with an advertisement in it.)*

HERMIONE

(Reading.)

"When you do dance, I wish you
A wave of the sea, that you might ever do
Nothing but that."

PERDITA

So said he. And to give them
A taste of my quality, I print Viola's words:

(Showing another passage of the advertisement.)

"Lady, you are the cruelest she alive.
If you will lead these dances to the grave,
And leave the world no copy." Learn of me.
There is a tide in the affairs of men
That taken at its flood,—leads them to tango.
I know a trick worth two of these.

(She sits on a cushion at the foot of the throne.)

HERMIONE

(Deeply distressed at her daughter's plan.)

I would the Gods had made thee poetical!

PERDITA

The poet's eye in a fine frenzy rolling,—
To fill my purse with money? 'Tis to laugh,—

(PERDITA *rises.*)

Say, tell me where is dancing bred,
In the heels or in the head?
I'll make my foot my tutor, and they'll learn
The dance of fashion and the mold of form.
There are more dances in heaven and earth, Hermione,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.
What say you to a neat foot?

(She dances a step or two.)

HERMIONE

It likes me not.
Mischief, thou art afoot!

PERDITA

(Crossing to the throne and trying to make her Mother understand.)

Good Mother, cast thy benighted notion off,
And let thine eye look like a friend on dancing.
Thou know'st 'tis common.

HERMIONE

Ay, Madam, it *is* common,
But 'tis a custom more honored in the breach
Than the observance. But have thy way;
My poverty, but not my will consents.

(She rises, pathetically.)

PERDITA

(Holding out her hand, she and HERMIONE *stroll to the centre of the room.)*

Necessity's the Mother of Invention,
And nothing comes amiss so money comes withal.

Hang out our banners on the outward wall,
The cry is still "They come."

(She runs up the steps at the rear as she says this.)

HERMIONE

This castle hath
A pleasant seat, here on the platform,
Where I'll watch.

(She strides back to the throne seat.)

PERDITA

How sweet the moon will sleep
Upon this bank.

(She gets the money box from pedestal.)

Sit, Hermione,
Thy way of life hath fallen into the sere
And yellow leaf, but this is the very coinage
To cure thy itching palm.

(She gives HERMIONE *the money box, kneeling ceremoniously. A loud knock is heard off left.)*

By the pricking of my thumbs
Something trick-ed this way comes.
Open, locks,
Whoever knocks!

(PUCK *has laughed and dashed up on the steps centre, looking off when the knock is heard.* ENTER ROSALIND dressed as a boy, *carrying a copy of the World. She assumes the traditional* ROSALIND *pose, her right outstretched arm holding the boar spear.)*

ROSALIND

Good morrow, fair ones: Pray if you know
Where in the purlieus of Bohemia stands
The dancing school of Perdita?

PERDITA

Behold it.
If that an eye should profit by a tongue,
Then I should know thee by description;
Such garments and such years. Sweet Rosalind!

(ROSALIND *salutes* HERMOINE *and* PERDITA. HERMIONE *calls the attention of* PERDITA *to the Money Box.)*

ROSALIND

Was't thou who taught Macbeth the *Harry Lauder?*
Discovered *Moorish Tangos* to Othello?
The *Melancholy Maxixe* showed to Jacques?
Did *Castle Walks* at Elsinore for Hamlet?
And did he learn from thee the *Hesitation?*

PERDITA

Yea. I must tell the truth and shame the devil.

ROSALIND (C.)

Then on the table of thy memory
Pray set me down a pupil. What's the cost?

(HERMIONE *opens the box;* ROSALIND *opens her purse.)*

And thou shalt have the pay of it from me.
Yea, twice the sum; if that will not suffice,
I will be bound to pay it ten times o'er.

PERDITA

(Gauging Rosalind's purse from aside.)

Sweetest Nut hath sourest rind.
Such a Nut is Rosalind.
Frailty, thy name is one step.

(Then to ROSALIND *she says aloud:)*

Fourscore ducats.

HERMIONE

(Becoming reconciled to the idea at once.)

Fourscore ducats at a sitting!
My daughter and my ducats!

(There is a knock heard off left. ROSALIND *pays* HERMIONE *the money. At this moment another loud knock is heard.)*

ROSALIND

Here's a knocking indeed!

(Knock is repeated. ROSALIND *crosses to left of the steps, and* PUCK, *who has gone up to see what the noise is, comes down beyond the chair at the left.* ENTER KATHERINE *the Shrew with a copy of the Times. She pauses at the top step.)*

KATHERINE

Where be these Knaves? What, no man at door?
What, no attendance, no regard, no duty?

(She glares at everyone.)

ROSALIND

Good Morrow, Kate, for that's your name I hear.

KATHERINE

Next Sunday week my sister's to be married.
I must dance barefoot on her wedding day.

(She assumes the traditional KATHERINE *pose, with crossed arms and a scowl, at the centre of the stage.)*

PERDITA

All this I can acquaint you, Madam,
According to the fashion and the time.

HERMIONE

(Aside to PERDITA, *fearing* KATHERINE *is not going to pay:)*

Is she not able to discharge the money?

KATHERINE

(Overhearing this, and throwing her hand bag to HERMIONE *at the foot of the throne.)*

Here's money. Only give me so much
Of your time in exchange for it as to lay
An amiable siege to the art of dancing.

PERDITA

(Opening the bag and pulling all sorts of feminine things from it,—but no money. She looks further:)

Hast any philosophy in thee? Though last, not least,—

(She has discovered a little change purse.)

Seven groats in mill sixpences. The pity of it!
'Tis not enough for lesson one, good Mother.

(Then to KATHERINE:)

You're yet my debtor.

(PERDITA *crosses right, takes a bond and quill from the money box, and holds it for* KATHERINE *to sign.* PUCK *rises to watch, running around behind the others to centre to get a good view.* KATHERINE *signs it.* PERDITA *is whispering to* HERMIONE.)

HERMIONE

I think I may take her bond.

(HERMIONE *locks the signed bond in the box.)*

KATHERINE

If brevity is the soul of wit, dance on,
And damned be she who first cries "Hold enough."

(PUCK *skips up to centre and* PERDITA *begins a dancing step, which* KATHERINE *is watching and about to imitate.)*

PERDITA

I shall in all my best obey you, Madam.

(PUCK *is centre in the archway,*
HERMIONE *on the throne.*
ROSALIND *left centre,*
PERDITA *near the throne and*
KATHERINE *down left.*
Outside the wailing voice of LADY MACBETH *is heard which interrupts all proceedings.)*

LADY MACBETH (Outside).

Macbeth! Macbeth! Macbeth!

KATHERINE

I stand like Patience on a monument.

HERMIONE

But look you yonder where the poor wretch comes reading.

(ENTER LADY MACBETH *reading a newspaper by the light of a candle she is carrying. She pauses at the top step.* PUCK *is nearby.)*

LADY MACBETH

To tango or not to tango, that is the question.

(She comes down the steps to center.)

Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous preachers

Or to put arms around the chariest maid
Who's prodigal enough if she unmask
Her beauty to the moon,—and the primrose path
Of dalliance tread. Out, out Brief Candle!

(PUCK *blows the candle out.* LADY MACBETH *does the Hamlet walk to the chair down left.)*

KATHERINE

(Who is at the extreme left.)

I had as lief be taught by a snail.

PERDITA

(Looking off left from right centre.)

But soft, what light thro yonder doorway breaks?
It is the East, and Juliet has the *Sun.*

(ENTER JULIET *with a copy of the Sun.)*

ROSALIND

The *World's* mine oyster!

KATHERINE

(Tearing up her paper and throwing the pieces under foot:)

Words, words, words!
The *Times* out of joint.

JULIET

Weep no more, ladies; foolery doth walk
About the orb like the *Sun;* it shines everywhere.

(She waves her newspaper.)

PERDITA

(To Juliet:)

Shall we make the welkin dance?

JULIET

My purpose is indeed a horse of that color.
'Twas at a dance I first met Romeo.
Oh, he is the almanac of my true date!

(PERDITA *and* ROSALIND *run to* JULIET *at centre to hear her confidences.)*

But something is rotten in the state of dancing.
I can no longer put my best foot foremost.
Hence, Perdita, come teach me, teach me,
For now I'm in holiday humor and like enough
To learn.

HERMIONE

(To JULIET:)

I must entreat of you some of that money.

JULIET

(Giving HERMIONE *money:)*

Dispense with trifles.

HERMIONE

(Locking the box:)

I like her money well.

LADY MACBETH

Is it honest in word and deed? Is it a good thing?

(She joins ROSALIND, JULIET *and* KATHERINE *at the centre and they begin a loud chatter of gossip.)*

PUCK

Ah, ha! Now they are clapper-clawing one
Another. I'll go look on.

(As PUCK *runs to listen, they all talk at once.)*

KATHERINE

You bite your tongue at me?

LADY MACBETH

Fair is foul and foul is fair.

ROSALIND

Oh, that I were in an ale house in London.

JULIET

God has given you one face and you make yourselves another.

(These four speeches are simultaneous.)

PERDITA

(Trying to make herself heard above the clatter:)

Friends, roaming country-women, lend me your ears!

(She holds her hand up to silence them.)

You come to learn the tango, not to praise it.
The evil in men's dance lives after them.
The good is oft interr-ed with the exercise.

KATHERINE

More matter with less art.

PERDITA

(Getting a lyre from behind the throne and placing it down stage right for PUCK.)

It will discourse most eloquent music, and
If music be the food of love, play on.

(PUCK *plays for the dancing.* PERDITA *during the following speech has lined up the others in the background and she illustrates each dance as she names it, taking the women, one after another for partners as she needs them.)*

PERDITA

All the world's a dance,
And all the men and women merely dancers:
They have their tempos and their temperaments
And each one in his time has many part-ners,
His dance being in seven ages. At first the jig step,—

(Music Cue: Jig which PERDITA *dances alone.)*

Kicking he learned it in his nurse's arms.
Then the winding Minuet,—

(Music Cue: Minuet, which she dances with JULIET.)

with its graces,
And smiling happy face, creeping like snail
Most willingly at rule. Then the Waltz step,—

(Music Cue: Waltz, which she dances with ROSALIND.)

Sighing like furnace with a woful ballad made
To his partner's ankle. Then the Polka,—

(Music Cue: Polka, with KATHERINE.)

Full of strange glides and rushing with his pard,
Violent in action, sudden and quick in stride,
Seeking the bubble reputation
Even in the cannon's mouth. And then the Cake Walk,—

(Music Cue: Cake Walk, with LADY MACBETH, *who falls exhausted in the chair at the left when the dance is ended.)*

With naught severe and naught of formal cut,
Full of wide steps and negro instances,
And thus it plays its part. The sixth dance shifts
Into the cabaret and vaudeville.

(Music Cue: Cabaret Tango Music. No dance. PERDITA *goes down to the footlights for these lines.)*

Where one may eat his fill if he hath that
To pay the reckoning. Where servants, tipped,
Do dance attendance on his lordship's pleasure,
And to speak by the card, that's meat and drink
To them. And meat it is you set it down
That one may dance and dance and be no villain
At least, I'm sure it may be so in restaurants;
Dance on, you fat and greasy citizens.
'Tis just the fashion, as if excess of
Appetite should grow by what it feeds on.
Tango doth murder sleep. Worst dance of all
That ends this strange eventful history
Is turkey-trottishness to mere oblivion.

(Music Cue: Turkey-trot.)

Sans grace, sans charm, sans taste, sans everything.

(PERDITA *and* JULIET *dance the turkey-trot.)*

KATHERINE

(Running over left to dance with LADY MACBETH.)

If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well
It were done quickly.

LADY MACBETH

(Starting to dance, and then stopping with one foot in the air,—)

Budge, says the fiend. Budge not, says my conscience.

ROSALIND

Thus conscience doth make cowards of us all.

(She takes JULIET *as a partner and all dance, starting a one-step, or turkey-trot, and ending with a cake walk.)*

HERMIONE

(Afraid she will lose money if she does not satisfy all doubts:)

There's nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so.

PERDITA

Wisely and slow! They stumble that go fast.
Come, dance it orderly and well. Suit
The action to the word and the word to the action.

(She lines them up in a row across the stage, standing before them. Music Cue: Maxixe. They strive to imitate her, awkwardly.)

Follow me: do not saw the air too much with your hand thus.
Look here upon this picture—and on this.

(She poses first awkwardly and then gracefully to illustrate her meaning. They dance a few steps of the Maxixe to the right and then back to their former places.)

What's in a name? A Fox Trot
By any other name would still be sweet.

(Music Cue: Fox Trot: PERDITA *dances with* JULIET, *to the right, then to the centre.* ROSALIND *follows alone to the right, imitating.)*

ROSALIND

'Tis as easy as lying.

PERDITA

You're to the manner born.

(PERDITA *takes* ROSALIND *as a partner, dancing from right to left.* JULIET *steps back right centre.)*

JULIET

She does it with a better grace, but I
Do it more natural.

KATHERINE

O Lord, how weary are my spirits.

ROSALIND

(Stopping her dance, she draws a long breath and hits the top of her boot.)

I care not for spirits, if my legs were not so weary.

*(*PERDITA *stands at the left watching.* KATHERINE *and* ROSALIND *dance a fox trot from left to centre,* JULIET *and* LADY MACBETH *from right to centre.* KATHERINE *and* LADY MACBETH *bump, back to back, and both fall sprawling, their feet straight out before them.)*

PUCK

A hit! A very palpable hit!

JULIET

Angels and ministers of grace, defend us!

HERMIONE

(Rising on the throne platform:)

Oh, what a fall was that!

LADY MACBETH

(Still on the floor:)

Some of us will smart for it.
Can such things be and overcome us like
A summer cloud without our special wonder?

KATHERINE

(Getting up and shaking herself:)

O, that this too, too solid flesh would melt!

ROSALIND

(To PERDITA, *giggling:)*

She's fat and scant of breath.

KATHERINE

(To ROSALIND, *rubbing her arms:)*

You jest at scars who never felt a wound.

*(*JULIET *has succeeded in helping* LADY MACBETH *to her feet, at left centre.)*

KATHERINE

(At centre.)

Madam, you have done me wrong, notorious wrong.

HERMIONE

The lady protests too much, methinks.

KATHERINE

You marble-hearted fiend!

PERDITA

(Coming in front of HERMIONE:)

Why, what's the matter?

KATHERINE

I am nothing if not critical. I would
Speak daggers to her. But I am too full
Of the milk of human kindness.

(She looks fixedly at LADY MACBETH. *All laugh. To* PERDITA:

O Shame, where is
Thy blush? Neither rhyme nor reason lies
In the deep damnation of your taking off.
Dressed in a little brief authority,
You do teach us a midsummer madness.
You tent us to the quick. Go! Get thee

To a nunnery. I do remember
An apothecary could dance as well.

PERDITA

(Breathless from astonishment:)
I was never so be-rhymed since Pythagoras' time.

KATHERINE

(With withering scorn:)
When you were an Irish Rat!

HERMIONE

Still *harping* on my daughter.

PERDITA

There's no offence.

HERMIONE

(Rising:)
Yes, by *St. Patrick,* but there is.

PERDITA

'Tis not
That time of moon with me to make one in
So skipping a dialogue.

HERMIONE

The retort courteous!
(She sits again:)

KATHERINE

(Getting ready to go:)
God give them wisdom that have it, and those
(Looking at PERDITA, *meaningly:)*
That are fools, let them use their talents.

PERDITA

Alack!
How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is
To teach a thankless shrew!

HERMIONE

The reproof valiant!
Yet more in sorrow than in anger. O
My daughter!

(Suddenly remembering that KATHERINE *has not paid for the first lesson she rises:)*

And my ducats! Madam, hold,
Omittance is no quittance.

KATHERINE

You can fool
No more money out of me at that throw.

HERMIONE

I'll have my bond. I will not hear thee speak.

(Rattling the cash box, she opens it and takes out the Bond.)

I'll have my bond!

KATHERINE

Thrift, thrift! Hermione.
Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale
Her infinite avariciousness.

(KATHERINE *goes up the steps at centre. Then to* PERDITA:)

I'll trip you so your heels may kick at heaven
And I am then revenged.

(KATHERINE EXITS *left centre and* PUCK, *carrying the lyre, watches her off, and then places the lyre at the right of the steps.* ROSALIND *has gone up centre to watch* KATH-

ERINE *off also, and as she disappears, she speaks:)*

ROSALIND

I dote on her very absence.

JULIET

That was laid on with a trowel.

(OPHELIA APPEARS, *in the flowing white robe, with the wreath of wild flowers about her hair, and her arms filled with nondescript weeds.)*

PERDITA

(Speaking before OPHELIA *is seen by the others.)*

Soft you now, the fair Ophelia. Nymph,
In thy orisons, be all our dance remembered.

OPHELIA

Where is the beauteous majesty of dancing?

LADY MACBETH

O what a noble mind is here o'erthrown!

OPHELIA

(Singing plaintively as she comes forward:)

How should I my Hamlet know,
From another one?
By his Hesitation waltz,
And his tango shoon.

(She wanders aimlessly down centre.)

HERMIONE

(Who has stood watching her, now sits:)

Mad for the tango?

PERDITA

Indeed, I do not know,
But truly I do fear it.

OPHELIA

Sweet ladies, I was sewing in my parlor;
Lord Hamlet with no hat upon his head,
Pale as his shirt, his knees knocking each other.
He comes before me.

LADY MACBETH

(Stalking over and seizing OPHELIA'S *wrist.)*

What said he?

OPHELIA

He took me by the wrist and held me hard.
Then goes he to the length of all his arm.
Long stayed he so.
At last a little shaking of mine arm,
And thrice his steps thus waved he up and down,

(She dances with LADY MACBETH, *three stiff steps down stage.)*

That done he lets go.

PERDITA

O proper stuff!
This is the very painting of my fear.
This is the Hesitation which I said
I taught to Hamlet.

LADY MACBETH

That way madness lies.

OPHELIA

(Singing:)

Tomorrow is Saint Valentine's day.
All in the morning betime,

And I must master the tango,
To be his Valentine.

HERMIONE

Though this be madness, yet there's method in it.
(OPHELIA *begins to weep.)*

ROSALIND

Alas, poor Yorick!

JULIET

Like Niobe, all tears.

HERMIONE

She is importunate, indeed distract.

LADY MACBETH

Her mood must needs be pitied.

OPHELIA

(Giving flowers to each of the women:)
There's rosemary,—
That's for remembrance. Pray love, remember,
'Tis more than I can do.
One step with the right foot, then with the left foot so,—

(She attempts the steps awkwardly, but shakes her head sadly, as she realizes it is beyond her:)

And there is pansies,—that's for thoughts. I would
Give you some violets, but they wither so-o-o—

(She pronounces this with a rising drawn out inflection.)

And there is rue for you, and some for me.
O, I must wear my rue, with a difference.

(She fastens it on her dress upside down. Then she begins her song again, working to-

ward the upper step and making her exit with the last word:)

And will he not hesitate,
And will he not tango again?
No, no, he is dead,
Gone to his death bed.
He never will,—fox-trot again.

(EXIT OPHELIA *with a fox trot step at left centre.*

(PUCK FOLLOWS *her as though to see what she will do next.)*

HERMIONE

I had thought to gild myself with some more ducats.
What time she chanted snatches of old songs;
Well, what's done cannot be undone.

(Off left, there is a loud noise of tramping feet, and voices. It is like the approach of a great crowd of people.)

PERDITA

What noise is this?

JULIET

(Going up the steps and looking off:)

That way the noise is.

(PERDITA EXITS *left centre to investigate.)*

HERMIONE

Daughter!

ROSALIND

(Going to HERMIONE, *left of throne:)*

She goes but to see a noise that she heard,
And is to come again.

(PERDITA RE-ENTERS *in great excitement. She speaks from the top of steps:)*

PERDITA

So foul and fair a day I have not seen!
Here come the officers.

HERMIONE

(Greatly frightened.)

One woe doth tread
Upon another's heels, so fast they follow.

(ROSALIND *goes to the right of the throne.)*

LADY MACBETH

(Pointing at HERMIONE.)

Who was most marble here, changed color.

PERDITA

I would a Daniel come to judgment
To report me and my cause aright.

HERMIONE

(Suddenly struck with a brilliant idea.)

The better part of valor is discretion.
I've a device to make all well.
A horse! A horse! My kingdom for a horse.

(She moves energetically to the centre of the room, waving her arms. Then she runs back to the throne, gets the money box and tucks it under her arm:)

I'll put a girdle round about the earth
In forty minutes.

(EXIT HERMIONE.)

PERDITA

(Sitting on the throne steps:)

The game is up!
'Tis Katherine, with all the *officers of Windsor!*

JULIET

(Looking out left centre:)

They stand at your door like a sheriff's post.

ROSALIND

(Hiding behind the throne chair:)

Alack the day! What shall I do with my doublet and hose?

(JULIET *hides behind a pillar on the platform and* PUCK DASHES IN *and hides down left.*

KATHERINE RE-ENTERS *with a huge official paper.)*

JULIET

Here comes the lady!

LADY MACBETH

(Standing at left centre:)

Confusion now hath made her masterpiece.

KATHERINE

I want that glib and oily art to speak
And purpose not. Uneasy lies the foot
That wears a ballet slipper.

(PERDITA, *sitting on the throne steps, hides her slippered foot quickly.)*

Now is the very
Witching hour that I can do it pat,—
A deed of dreadful note. Perdita, all
The perfumes of Arabia cannot strengthen
Thy little hand. The jailer will look to thee.
You cannot deny the course of law.

(PUCK *slips down and lights* LADY MACBETH'S *candle, unseen by her.* EXIT PUCK.)

LADY MACBETH

Read the indictment.

KATHERINE

(Opening the document she carries and reading it:)

O for a Muse of fire! For Lady Macbeth would seem to me this night a torch bearer. How came she by that light? I know not. But 'tis against the law and Majesty of Bohemia to make insurance doubly sure. There's Rosalind doth wander in the forest and in man's apparel, and Juliet hath broken forth from out the Tombs, that undiscovered bourne from which no traveller returns. While Perdita keeps watch at night, holds wassail and the staggering one-step reels. Die a dry death! O reform it altogether. By such sin fell the angels.

(HERMIONE ENTERS *centre, crosses to the throne.* PERDITA *rises as* PORTIA ENTERS, *followed by* PUCK.)

ALL

Portia!

PORTIA

(At centre.)

I am Sir Oracle,
And when I ope my lips, let no dog bark!

(HERMIONE *beckons her to take the throne which* PERDITA *has vacated.* PUCK *crosses to extreme left, where he sets on the floor chuckling at what follows.)*

KATHERINE

Are you acquainted with the difference
That holds this present question in the Court?

PORTIA

(On the throne:)

I am informèd thoroughly of the cause.
Which is the dancer here and which the Shrew?

HERMIONE

Perdita and Katherine, both stand forth.

(They step forward.)

PORTIA

Is your name Katherine?

KATHERINE

Katherine is my name.

PORTIA

(To PERDITA:)

You stand within her danger, do you not?

PERDITA

Ay, so she says.

PORTIA

Do you confess the dance hall?

PERDITA

I do.

KATHERINE

Ha!

(Striking a traditional pose:)

PORTIA

Without a license?

PERDITA

My license, is,—poetical.

PORTIA

Then must the Shrew be merciful.

KATHERINE

On what compulsion must I? Tell me that?

PORTIA

(Greatly surprised at the question:)

Why, the quality of Mercy is not strained.
Didst thou not learn that in thy salad days
When thou wast green? 'Twere good you were schooled.
Let's have the warrant.

*(*KATHERINE *takes it out and holds it toward* PORTIA *with rude indifference.* PORTIA *looks at her severely, whereupon* KATHERINE *comes forward and presents the warrant with a bow.)*

Once more to the breach,
If you have tears, prepare to shed them now.

(She examines the warrant on both sides, up and down.)

Ha ha! This warrant's forfeit.

(General movement from all.)

It is such stuff as dreams are made of.
'Tis an air drawn dagger signifying nothing.
Your own opinion was your law. 'Tis naught.

(She turns and looks at ROSALIND, *then asks* KATHERINE:)

Call ye that suited all points like a man?
A swashing and a martial outside? That?
A tailor made her therefore let her pass
For a man.

(She turns to LADY MACBETH, *whose candle* PUCK *has blown out some time before.)*

Look to the lady. As good luck
Would have it, see,—her candle has burnt out.

How far that little candle threw its beams.
So shines a good dance in an awkward world.

(She turns to JULIET:)

And Juliet,—escaped from out the Tombs!
And wherefore not, forsooth? You shut the door
Upon a woman's wit, 'twill out at the casement.
That warrant's old,—a poor, infirm, weak and
Despised old thing and no more like this season's
Than I to Hercules. Throw physic to

(She turns to PERDITA.)

The dogs. Go wear the rose of youth upon you.

(PORTIA *takes a rose from her gown and tosses it to* PERDITA, *who catches and kisses it, happily.)*

Dance on forever and a day. Yea,—
Thank heaven fasting, for a good man partner.
Some are born dancers, some achieve the fox trot,
And some have bunnyhugging cast about them.
And indeed, it is a dance more sinned against
Than sinning.

LADY MACBETH

She loves to hear herself talk.

KATHERINE

(On the steps up centre.)

Farewell, a long farewell, to all my greatness.
My cake is dough. I screwed my courage to
The sticking point and yet I failed.
So to your pleasures,
I am for other than for dancing measures.

(EXIT KATHERINE *centre.)*

ROSALIND

(Swaggering to the steps left centre:)

Parting is such sweet sorrow.

JULIET

(Standing at the left of ROSALIND *at the foot of the steps:)*

'Tis my speech!
Let them that play the clowns speak no more than
It is set down for them.

PORTIA

Oh, if this were played
Upon a stage now, I would condemn it
As an improbable fiction.

PERDITA

(Going to the door centre and leading KATHERINE *back down stage:)*

One touch of nature makes the whole world kin.
Thus do we find gestures in trees, dances
In the running brooks, poses in stones,
And good in everything. Come, our dance,
I say! Join us good people.

(PUCK *joins the others in an Elizabethan round, ancient music or Schubert's Moment Musicale, as in the beginning. The lights flash out suddenly. The drop at the arch falls. As the lights come up again,* JUSTINE *wakes with a start, her dream still vivid. She looks around, stretches, rubs her eyes, yawns, and starts to work again on her thesis, and the curtain falls.)*

THE END

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THE GENTLEST GIANT *just had* to bend over,
or else he wouldn't have been in the picture at all.

Drawing by Dugald Stewart Walker.

OPERA GLASSES

Aren't opera glasses funny things,
The way that you can see
By looking through the little end
As big as big can be?

Yet when you turn and look them through
Where they are large and round,
The things you look at are so small
They scarcely can be found.

I'm going to ask my aunt to lend
Her glasses every day,
So I can see things far and near,
And have new games to play.

Then when I look at medicine
The far-off end I'll take,
But use the way it looks the most
To see ice cream and cake.

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